The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1621 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 5, 1942 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 32, NO. 18

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

Westbrook Pegler went away out on a limb the other day and we're going to chop him down.

He had the colossal gall to say that labor is bribing newspapermen to write nice stories about unions!

That is the damndest lie ever published.

Pegler based his libelous charges on a paragraph from an article written by B. L. Stanford, editor of the Southern Textilorker, which was issued March 27 in the New Orleans Federationist, a labor paper. Mr. Stanford said that Central Labor Councils in various parts of the country, in an effort to get the truth about labor published in the press, had gone to the extent "of putting reporters of the newspapers on their payrolls."

Pegler leaped on this statement with both feet without taking the trouble to check it. We did. We discovered that Mr. Stanford referred to the hiring of former newspapermen as publicity representatives for central labor councils. What's wrong with that? Union officials are not trained to prepare news announcements for release to the press, as they hire experts to do it. The American Federation of Labor at its last convention officially urged all central labor unions to do this. Unfortunately, not enough of them have responded to spend the money. Labor unions don't have the bankroll of private corporations like the DuPont Company which, we are informed, has forty-three press agents on its staff. The United States Government has hired thousands of newspapermen for the same purpose.

A Poll of the Press

We took a poll of the newspapermen who cover labor in Washington to find out whether they had been bribed and, if so, by whom. The response was indignant, as we expected. We asked them if they had ever been "taken for a free ride" to national labor conventions and "entertained and likkered up" by the unions. Well, that stirred up a hornet's nest.

In fact, one of the newspapermen took occasion to come back at Pegler with the charge that the self-righteous columnist has consumed in his time more free liquor than any other dozen newspapermen in the entire country.

But, most of the newspaper writers insulted by Pegler were inclined to take his scurrilous statements in a more serious vein. They recalled the fact that Pegler has consistently fought organization of newspapermen into trade unions and that the writers covering labor have been active in this field. They wondered whether Pegler's attack sprang from sinister motives.

However the best answer to Pegler came from New York. It was announced in that city that Louis Stark, of the New York Times, had been awarded the Pulitzer prize for distinguished reporting in the labor field. Louis Stark, as everyone knows, is the dean of labor reporters in the entire country, respected by every one who has come in contact with him. Lou knows more about labor than Pegler knows about whiskey. They are each experts in their respective fields.

Truth From Lippmann

But now let's drop Pegler and move on to a more intelligent and literate columnist. We refer to Walter Lippmann. He wrote a piece the other day that was so cogent and compelling in its logic that we wish to quote from it at length. Here goes:

"It is all very well for Congressmen or newspaper writers to say: let us pass laws forbidding strikes, laws freezing industrial relations, laws freezing wages. They do not have to administer those laws. The President would have to administer them. And if he can outlaw strikes, if he can preserve order in industrial relations, if he can stabilize the wage structure, if he can do all these things with the assistance of the labor leaders and labor unions, the ultimate effect will be infinitely surer and more satisfactory. Let us never forget that you can lead a horse to water but that you cannot make him drink. You can lead a workingman to the tools but you cannot make him work with his whole heart.

"Obviously we cannot win the war and have strikes. We cannot win the war and have endless wrangling about the terms of closed shop. We cannot win the war if wages go into a competitive spiral as employers bid against one another. But in our eagerness to deal with these matters, let us be careful, let us be very careful indeed, not to impair the will to work by getting into a position where it even looks as if we were using the emergency of war to break up the unions and to destroy the labor movement.

"If we make that terrible mistake, we shall destroy the influence of the patriotic leaders of labor, and their power to arouse enthusiasm and to instill discipline. We shall create the most powerful incentive to sabotage, that which exists when men feel oppressed, and are sullen, and work listlessly, and are ready to listen to irresponsible agitators and adventurers. In these matters, details aside, the President is wiser, and more sure-footed than his critics, at least as anxious as they to win the war, and as well aware of what it will take to win the war."

Green Hits Unfair NLRB Decision Fomenting Disputes In War Plant

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green charged that the National Labor Relations Board is fomenting disputes and upsetting labor relations in a vital war production plant by its decision in the case of the employes of the Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Company, which makes parts for tanks.

Mr. Green joined with President R. A. Olson and Secretary George W. Lawson of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor in declaring:

"Where labor organizations are trying to aid the Government's war program and avoid disputes and slowdowns and are voluntarily giving up the right to strike, it is disturbing to note that the National Labor Relations Board can make such a decision, the obvious effect of which is to foment disputes and trouble in a war plant and to injure the war effort."

In letters to the members of the NLRB, Mr. Green pointed out that the AFL Federal union had won the election in the plant by 15 votes. A CIO union then entered over 100 ballots that were not included in the total vote. This delay was given by the NLRB as the reason for calling a new election, but Mr. Green emphasized that the delay was the fault of the CIO union itself. It never passed on the validity of the challenged ballots but instead of deciding the case on the merits and certifying the AFL union, it dodged the issues by ordering a new election.

Stabilization In Britain

London (By Cable to British Press Service).—The biggest achievement in Britain's war economy has been the way in which prices and wages have been kept comparatively steady despite terrific upheaval. According to the latest index, the cost of living is up 30 per cent and wages 25 per cent since the war started. Prices today are the same today as in May, 1941, since which time wages have shown a slight rise.

During the first war months the government took steps to counter price increases. The Chancellor of the Exchequer of that period, Sir John Simon, consulted the Trades Union Congress and employers' organizations on the same kind of problems as Mr. Roosevelt's message submitted to the American Congress. The trade unions did not abandon the tradition of the free play of normal wage negotiation, and suggested that the government should keep down prices by control or subsidy, and encourage voluntary saving and make the categorical declaration that increased profits are detrimental to the interests of the country.

This plan was never formally accepted but most of it was gradually put into effect. Parliament passed an act limiting increases in certain kinds of food and permitting consumers to complain if the local price regulation committees were suspected of profiteering.

The Board of Trade was empowered to fix maximum prices on goods and services, and to limit margins of profit of manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. The Food Ministry was empowered to fix prices on a wide range of foods, and prices paid the farmers were fixed by negotiation with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Costs of building materials were also limited.

A subsidy amounting last year to $800,000,000 kept down the prices of bread, flour, sugar, milk and meat. Rents of houses up to $480 yearly were stabilized. The excess profits tax absorbed all profits over the level earned during the three years before the war.

This is the framework on which British wartime economy is based. In addition, there have been big savings campaigns and the people have been encouraged to keep down spending, to control or subsidy, and encourage voluntary saving and make the categorical declaration that increased profits are detrimental to the interests of the country.

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PRINTING PRESSMEN BUY $873,249 IN WAR BONDS

Washington, D. C.—George L. Berry, president of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants Union of North America, Pressmen's Home, Tenn., notified AFL President William Green that by April 23 the international union, and its locals had purchased war stamps and bonds in the amount of $873,249.

In addition to the foregoing, he found members, we have now in the military service of the United States and Canada 2,000 members," Mr. Berry said.

LABOR FOR VICTORY!

Employers Tell How Unions Help Increase Vital War Production

New York City—Union-management cooperation has made possible greatly increased production of vital implements of war, three outstanding industrial executives disclosed in radio interviews over the "Labor For Victory" program on a nation-wide NBC network.

Philip G. Johnson, President of the Boeing Aircraft Company, declared that delivery of Flying Fortresses made by his firm has "more than doubled" since Dec. 7. He added:

"We want to win this war and we know we're building a weapon that will help to do it. Every executive and every worker in our plants is on the job. We still have a tremendous job ahead and we've got to do it in a hurry to win this war. We know how badly our boys at the battlefront need Flying Fortresses and we are trying to get them out as fast as machinery and human hands can go, and just as fast as we can get the materials to build them with."

Mr. Johnson said the company "has worked very closely in cooperation" with the unions representing its employes. The unions are Aeronautical District No. 751 of the International Association of Machinists, covering production workers, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local No. 174, and the International Union of Helpers and Helpers' Apprentices. All are affiliates of the American Federation of Labor.

The second employer interviewed was Mr. A. J. Higgins, President of Higgins Industries, Inc., Bakers of torpedo boats and other small combat craft and Liberty cargo ships. He said:

"We are building them (torpedo boats) at top speed. We have stepped up production very greatly in the last few months, particularly since Pearl Harbor. We are developing the world's largest shipbuilding plant."

Asked about the spirit of his employes, Mr. Higgins said:

"The spirit of the overwhelming majority of our thousands of workmen is simply grand. They are working with all their skill and all their strength for just one thing—the only thing that is important today—PRODUCTION."

Mr. Higgins, whose firm has contracts with the various crafts of the American Federation of Labor, added:

"Without cooperation between the management and the unions it would have been impossible to build ships in record-breaking time, as we have done. The unions have made an important contribution—first, by supplying us with skilled craftsmen, trained by workmen without interruption and working hard, and third, by offering suggestions for increasing our efficiency."

The final interview was with Mr. Peter W. Eller, Vice President of the Thompson-Starrett Company, Inc., which has contracts for construction war construction work. He said:

"Every one of them (war construction projects) is coming along on schedule or ahead of schedule."

Mr. Eller said his company has had closed shop contracts with building trades unions of the A. F. of L. since its inception. Asked about the company's relations with these unions, he said:

"Well, there's no use kidding ourselves or the public by saying we never have had any troubles. We do run into difficulty occasionally and that's to be expected in the normal course of business. But generally, over the years, our relations with the building and construction unions have been fine. Our policy has always been a square deal and we have found that such a policy pays dividends. We treat our workers right and they treat us right. As a result, building trades mechanics and laborers are anxious to work for us and give us good service."

In summing up the program, Philip Pearl, commentator for the A. F. of L., pointed out that the three employers interviewed were not exceptional but typical of thousands of American leaders of industry who are working shoulder to shoulder with union labor today to help win the war."

The Executive Council Meets

Washington, D. C.—With many vital war labor problems awaiting action, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor will open its regular Spring meeting here on May 13.

The Council will review developments since its last meeting in January and chart policies and programs for the coming quarter. The session is expected to be one of the most important in AFL history.

Green and Murray Agree on Plan To Settle Jurisdiction Disputes

Washington, D. C.—Procedure for settling union jurisdictional cases that may come before the National War Labor Board has been set up by joint agreement between William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, and Philip Murray, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, William H. Davis, chairman of the board, announced.

"The Council and I have said, will continue for the duration of the war and will apply to disputes between unions within the AFL and the CIO, as well as disputes between unions of the two labor organizations.

"Under procedures worked out with Philip Murray, president of the CIO, and William Green, president of the AFL," Mr. Davis announced; "all jurisdictional questions in cases coming before the War Labor Board will be referred as a matter of course to the labor members of the board for adjustment.

"If any particular dispute cannot be settled by the labor members, Mr. Murray and Mr. Green will be so notified and they will thereupon promptly appoint a group or individual to make a final and binding determination of the dispute.

"Jurisdictional disputes have always been the most difficult to settle because of their very nature. The American people will welcome this agreement between the two labor organizations for finally determining all jurisdictional disputes until the war is won."

Green Backs 10 Per Cent Payroll Deductions to Purchase War Bonds

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green asked all American Federation of Labor unions and their members to comply promptly with the Government's program for voluntary 10 per cent payroll deductions for the purchase of War Bonds.

In letters to all affiliated organizations, Mr. Green warned that some Government representatives and members of Congress favor legislation for compulsory payroll deductions. He added:

"Labor favors voluntary action and is against compulsory action. I feel sure labor will respond and will voluntarily agree to a payroll deduction of 10 per cent of earnings to be invested in War Bonds that compulsory savings legislation will be defeated.

"I appeal to the workers to respond favorably to the recommendations I have herein made.

"The need is urgent. The war effort calls for service and sacrifice of the highest order. Labor is responding and has responded in a noble way. I am sure labor will respond to this appeal as it has to other appeals for support of the Government in its war effort."

The American Federation of Labor launched a one billion dollar War Bond savings drive among its members last February. To date purchases and pledges exceeding $300,000,000 have been reported by AFL members and their union organizations.

L. I. O. LEADERS VISION BIG POST-WAR PROBLEMS

New York, N. Y.—The governing committee of the International Labor Office at its meeting in London, England, stressed the need for coordinating the efforts of the many organizations interested in planning to combat post-war problems, according to the three American members of the committee on their return here.

Dr. Carter Lymann Goodrich, Columbia University Professor of Economics and chairman of the ILO governing board, said the main decision reached in London was to establish a committee of non-governmental experiences and from various regions to determine the economic conditions of post-war settlements in order to relate the social aims of the Atlantic Charter."

Robert J. Watt, International Representative of the American Federation of Labor, who attended the London meeting as the American workers' delegate, said that in considering post-war problems "we must consider the problems of all nations, including those of the Axis."

Anti-Labor Blitzkrieg Fizzles! House Kills Smith-Vinson Bill And Senate Puts Off Action

Let Congress Adjourn!

As President Green has said, "new laws won't win this war, but hard fighting and hard work will!"

So let Congress adjourn as soon as possible.

America is all set to go. The time for talk is over. We can't win this war by debating. We've got to fight and to work.

So let's send Congress home!

All our Representatives in Congress and one-third of our Senators are up for re-election this Fall. They won't do themselves any good with the American people by continuing to blabber-mouth as usual. The voters want less talk and more action!

We say this with all due respect to the Members of Congress. The great majority of our elected representatives are hard-working, sincere Americans. They've been going at a hard clip up to now, adopting necessary appropriation and authorization bills. But the slate of required legislation is just about completed. If they are going to sit around in Washington indefinitely and just talk they will only create dislike and disrespect for themselves and their high office.

And let us offer one parting word to the labor-haters in Congress who tried unsuccessfully to impair the freedom of American workers and destroy their standards:—Goodbye, you're not coming back!

Legislation Now Dead For Entire Session, Capitol Observers Say

Washington, D. C.—Congress dealt anti-labor legislation a fatal blow when the Smith-Vinson Bill was killed in the House Naval Affairs Committee and Senate bills, almost equally vicious, were effectively sidetracked.

These victories, resulting from the most vigorous legislative battle ever conducted by the American Federation of Labor, were universally interpreted on Capitol Hill as meaning that all anti-labor proposals are as good as dead for the balance of this session of Congress.

President Roosevelt helped rout labor's enemies by informing Congress in a special message that he opposed abolition of the 40-hour week and compulsory anti-strike legislation.

The House Naval Affairs Committee then voted down the various Smith-Vinson proposals 13 to 12. But even more significant was the vote on a motion to reconsider which was lost by 16 to 9, thus showing the legislators were glad to get rid of a hot potato.

In the Senate, the move to get immediate action on the Connally anti-labor bill was halted when Senator Connally, the sponsor of the measure, himself asked that it be laid aside. This followed the sending of a letter by President William Green expressing the AFL's unalterable opposition to the Connally Bill and a similar measure offered by Senator Ball.

Thus the anti-labor blitzkrieg, which at one time seemed terrific proportions, finally fizzled out like a harmless Roman candle.

Even with the Smith-Vinson, Connally and Ball bills out of the picture, however, there are several other measures pending which organized labor is fighting tooth and nail. Chief of these are the Monroney Bill, which would make labor unions and their members subject to prosecution under the anti-trust laws and the Vinson Bill, which requires unions to register with the Government and give out financial information which may be of benefit to employers.

President Green hailed the setback of labor's enemies in Congress as a spur to the morale of American war production workers and a victory for, the millions of wage-earners over the forces of reaction.

He pointed out that the anti-labor campaign was fomented by powerful interests and had the almost unanimous support of the daily press. Employers organizations tried to put the heat on Congress and conducted high-power propaganda drives in favor of legislation to abolish the closed shop, the 40-hour week, overtime standards and the right to strike.

This campaign was based on lies which the AFL effectively exposed despite the failure of the newspapers to give a fair break to labor's side of the case.

Lie No. 1 which was hit on the head was the charge that labor was delaying the war production program with strikes. The AFL proved that strikes are at a minimum since organized labor voluntarily placed itself on a no-strike basis for the duration.

Lie No. 2 which was nailed was the allegation that the 40-hour week restricted the output of war materials. Official facts and figures showed that all war industries were operating for more than forty hours a week—some of them actually being in continuous, round-the-clock operation—but that the real reason for the fight on the 40-hour week was to relieve employers of the necessity of paying overtime.

Lie No. 3 which was blasted to smithereens was the charge by the National Association of Manufacturers that disputes over union security were delaying production. The AFL and the CIO joined in proving that the President of the NAM and other employer representatives had agreed with President Roosevelt that the question of union security is a proper subject for collective bargaining by the National War Labor Board.

Davison To Run Against Rep. Smith; Labor Supports Union Candidate

Washington, D. C.—Rep. Howard W. Smith (D., Va.) faces a series of anti-labor bills bearing his name, will be opposed for re-election by James C. Davison, secretary-treasurer of the International Association of Machinists, AFL.

Davison announced his candidacy and filed the necessary petitions making him a candidate against Smith in the Democratic primary election, which will be held in August.

In the 8th District of Virginia, which Smith has represented in Congress since 1930, Democratic nomination means election.

Smith is leader of the anti-labor bloc in the House and has sponsored a series of bills designed to outlaw the closed shop for the duration of the war.

Davison is a former mayor of Alexandria, Smith's home town. He will be backed by organized labor throughout the district. The Railroad Brotherhoods and the building trades unions have considerable strength there. In his announcement of candidacy, however, Davison made it plain that he intended to appeal to the electorate at large, not just to labor.

He said Smith has misrepresented the district in his fanatical anti-labor campaign—that voters of all classes are eager to oust him. Smith has consistently opposed President Roosevelt's domestic measures both on the floor and in the Rules Committee. He also has opposed the Administration on some questions of foreign policy. For example, he voted against lifting the ban on delivery of Lend-Lease goods to England in U. S. ships.

"Farmers, veterans, small merchants, businessmen, laborers, editors and other professional people," Davison declared, "are up in arms against the reckless, inflammatory, hysterical speeches of Howard Smith in Congress. His action of turning class against class have created suspicion, doubt and confusion. He is proving the National No. 1 enemy of 100 per cent prosecution of the war."

A Message To The Farmers

Washington, D. C.—An important message to the American farmer "from his best customer" has just been issued by the American Federation of Labor in pamphlet form. It says, in part:

"You grow it—we buy it.

"We make it—you use it.

"Your interests as farmers, our interests as industrial workers, are the same. We are working for each other, but right now we are working for America first of all, because our country is at war.

"Now labor's part is with the war—hand to hand with you. The farmers and industrial workers of America are the ones who have to do the work—and we will do it with all our hearts and all our strength until victory is won."

The pamphlet pledges the help of the AFL to the farmers in securing a fair price for crops and also makes the following reference to the organization of farmers:

"The American Federation of Labor does not—and will not—organize farmers into trade unions. No one in this direction has ever asked us for support. We respect the right of farmers to join their own farm organizations to protect their economic interests."

The AFL advises farmers to put this pamphlet into the hands of as many farmers as possible. All central labor unions and State Federations of Labor are urged to help in distributing them. Copies may be obtained free of charge by writing to the American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C.

AFL UNION ASKS FUNDS TO PREVENT WAR FIRES

Washington, D. C.—George W. Richardson, Secretary-Treasurer of the International Association of Fire Fighters, urged the Senate Agriculture Committee to adopt a proposal by Senator Tom Stewart (Democrat) to provide funds for the prevention of fires and explosions in the production, storage and transportation of war materials made from agricultural products.

Mr. Richardson said valuable and necessary war supplies are being lost and needlessly destroyed because of the lack of adequate fire prevention measures. Many firemen have lost their lives fighting such fires, he pointed out. The proposed fire prevention program would be handled by the Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering of the Department of Agriculture.

GEORGIA AFL MOBILIZES FOR WAR BOND CAMPAIGN

Washington, D. C.—Charles B. Gramling, president of the Georgia Federation of Labor, informed AFL President William Green that after hearing the first "Labor for Victory" broadcast and President Roosevelt's address to the nation, the Executive Board of the Georgia Federation adopted a resolution pledging itself and its membership to accept responsibility for success of the AFL War Bond campaign in Georgia, said pledging "a ten per cent allotment for war bonds and stamps every pay day as long as the emergency lasts."

MRS. ROOSEVELT ASSAILS ANTI-LABOR PROPAGANDA

New York City—Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt has launched a counterattack against labor-baiters.

"There has been a deliberate propaganda drive against labor," she said to a Y. W. C. A. meeting. "It is not duly directed at the public mind, but it is also being done in the armed forces."

Mrs. Roosevelt said that the "awfully clever people" conducting the campaign were seeking to spread the idea that it was unpatriotic for workers to receive decent wages while soldiers got less.

She said it was the duty of the American worker to preserve labor standards for workers at the front.

For the sake of national unity, she said, "all of us" should fight the false propaganda that American labor has retarded the war effort.

U. S. SHIPYARDS BUILT 36 NEW SHIPS IN APRIL

Washington, D. C.—American shipyards put new ship construction record in April, completing and delivering thirty-six merchant vessels.

The Maritime Commission said that the record exceeded the one-a-day schedule which was set up for April and brought the record for the first four months of 1942 to 105 merchant ships placed in war service by the United Nations. This, the commission said, exceeds the entire merchant vessel production by American shipyards in 1941.